(c) In order to increase the production and productivi ty of oilseeds, a centrally sponsored Oilseeds Production Programme (OPP) i:s in operation in 25 States covering 396 selected districts in the country, Unc ler this scheme, financial assistance is being provided for the critical inputs like production and distribution of seeds, distribution of seed minikits, sprinkle r sets, improved farm implements gypsum/ pyrites, micro-nutrients, rhyzobiun 1 culture etc. to the farmers through State Governments. In addition to this, front line and general demonstrations are also organised on the farmers' fields to dissem inate improved production of protection technologies.

Upgradation of Quality and Stock of Cattle

4883. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India own one of the largest livestock population in the world;

(b) the majority of these cattle are reared under sub-optimal conditions due to the low economic status of the owners resulting in a low yield; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Governm ent to upgrade the quality and stock of its cattle?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. As per 1992 Livestock Census the livestock population of the country was 4,70,860 thousand during that year which constituted around 12 per cent of the world livestock population.

(b) The information regarding the conditions under which these cattle are reared, is not collected.

(c) Animal Husbandry & Dairying is a State subject. However, the efforts of the State Governments are supplemented by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India. The Scheme relevant for improving the quality and stock are (i) Extension of Frozen Semen Technology (EFST) and Progeny Testing Programme (PTP), and (ii) National Bull Production Programmed (NBPP). The Government is providing funds to the State Governments to develop infrastructure for breeding operations, conservation of indigenous breed of cattle, bull production and registration, and progeny testing. The Ghoshalas/NGOs/VOs are involved for these activities and

implementation of Embryo Transfer Technol- ogy for Preservation of indigenous breeds. Following funds wre released during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000:—

(Rs. in Lakhs)

	EFST	NBPP	PTP
1997-98	2550	500	120.68
1998-99	552	8	58.00
1999-2K	2499.97	709.98	95.72
TOTAL	5601.97	1217.98	274.40

Agricultural Policy

†4884. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any date has been fixed by Government for announcing a new agricultural policy in the country;

(b) if so, what is that date;

(c) if not, the reasons for further delay in the announcement of new agricultural policy; and

(d) whether Government will fix any time-limit in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK STYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) The national Agriculture Policy is in final stage of drafting and is likely to be announced shortly, it is, therefore, not necessary to fix a time-limit for its announcement.

Facilities for production of Agricultural and Horticultural Items in Himachal Pradesh

4885. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.